

# San Francisco Cinematheque

October — December 2008

## This Season...

Sarah Wylie Ammerman  
Stephanie Barber  
Devin Bell  
bran(...)pos  
Mike Brune  
Andrew Cahill  
John Campbell  
Catherine Chalmers  
Abigail Child  
Richard Dinter  
Thorsten Fleisch  
Johunna Grayson  
Christoph Giradet  
Michaela Grill  
Terence Hannum  
Michael Hession  
Peter Hutton  
Minyong Jang  
Joshua Kanies  
Adam Keker  
Shelby Kennedy  
Diane Kitchen  
Mami Kosemura  
Georg Koszulinski  
Michael Langan  
Mark LaPore  
Jeanne Liotta  
Scott MacDonald  
Gunvor Nelson  
Arianne Olthaar  
Osbert Parker

Jean Gabriel Periot  
Ben Peters  
David Phillips  
Leighton Pierce  
Luther Price  
Josh Raskin  
Vanessa Renwick  
Ben Rivers  
Daniel Robin  
Paul Rowley  
Ben Russell  
Jeff Scher  
Kelly Sears  
Semiconductor  
Anne Severson  
Richie Sherman  
Martin Siewert  
Greta Snider  
Alexandra Steele  
Chick Strand  
matthew swiezynski  
Masako Tanaka  
Naoko Tasaka  
Martin Thoburn  
Leslie Thornton  
Robert Todd  
Apichatpong Weerasethakul  
Rachael Perry Welty  
Chel White  
Wiggwaum  
May Lin Au Yung



# Behind the Screens

## Our Purpose

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## Join Cinematheque

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## Stay Informed

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To receive our e-newsletter, send a blank email to: [sf\\_cinematheque-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:sf_cinematheque-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

## Program Notes go digital!

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Image: Jeanne Liotta, *Observando El Cielo*

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Gilbert Guerrero



## Thanks To Our Funders

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NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE ARTS

A great nation  
deserves great art.



Zellerbach  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

Image: bran[...]pos, photo by JP Obley



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# At A Glance 2008 October - December

SUN 10/12, 7:30 PM, YBCA  
**Remembering Mark LaPore**

SUN 10/19, 7:30 PM, YBCA  
**Leslie Thornton: Tuned Always to a Shifting Ground**  
program one

TUES 10/21, 7:30 PM, YBCA  
**Leslie Thornton: Tuned Always to a Shifting Ground**  
program two

SUN 10/26, 7:30 PM, YBCA  
**Leslie Thornton: Tuned Always to a Shifting Ground**  
program three

SUN 11/2, 7:30 PM, YBCA  
**Johunna Grayson and Greta Snider's *Dimensional Bodies***

THURS 11/6, 8 PM, ATA  
**46th Ann Arbor Film Festival Tour, program one**

FRI 11/7, 8 PM, ATA  
**46th Ann Arbor Film Festival Tour, program two**

SUN 11/9, 7:30 PM, YBCA  
**Nice Biscotts and More: New Films by Luther Price**

SUN 11/23, 7:30 PM, YBCA  
**Scott MacDonald on Canyon Cinema: The Spirit of Canyon**

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**Dark House**

SUN 12/7, 7:30 PM, YBCA  
**Technology, Nature and Other Matters**

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**bran(...)pos + Wiggwaum: Sound vs. Image**

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**At Sea**



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PHOTOGRAPH BY JOUANE LIOTTA

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Image: bran(...).pos, photo by JP Olney



# San Francisco Cinematheque

February — April 2008

## YBCA

Verba Buena Center for the Arts

701 Mission Street (at Third) San Francisco CA  
www.ybca.org

TICKETS at YBCA:

\$10 General / \$6 Members, Students, Seniors, Disabled  
For advance tickets to YBCA shows, please call 415.978.ARTS

## ATA

Artists' Television Access

992 Valencia Street (at Twenty-first) San Francisco CA  
www.atasite.org

TICKETS at ATA: \$6

All program descriptions by Steve Polta unless indicated.

## 10/12 Sunday @ 7:30 pm, YBCA

### Remembering Mark LaPore

Mark LaPore (1952-2005) was an uncanny observer, a profound wanderer and explorer. His work in film applied a fascinated observational patience, akin to that of Lumière and Warhol, to deeply explore the tangled relationships between ethnography and individual subjectivity while elaborating a complex philosophy of visual ethics. In anticipation of a larger screening series commemorating his work and relationships, we present *The Sleepers, A Depression in the Bay of Bengal, The Five Bad Elements* and *The Glass System*, four films—variously based on encounters and experiences in Sudan, Sri Lanka, Calcutta and New York—which reveal uncanny similarities between cultures as well as profound, possibly irreconcilable differences. **1**

## Immersive Cinema, Fall 2008

### Leslie Thornton: Tuned Always to a Shifting Ground

Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, *Immersive Cinema* is a series of concentrated, multi-part artist residencies. Through Spring 2009, each season's chapter will survey the work of an active film/video artist, allowing him or her to creatively present new, previously viewed and in-progress work in personally significant contexts. Each series features the artist in person and is accompanied by a specially created, limited edition commemorative publication (which will be available free at screenings). Following the March 2008 presentation of *Jennifer Reeves: Light Work*, Cinematheque is proud to present *Leslie Thornton: Tuned Always to a Shifting Ground*.

Working for over three decades, Leslie Thornton has created an incredibly deep and complex body of film/video work. As a young artist, Leslie Thornton studied with Brakhage, Sharits, Frampton and Leacock and locates her work as squarely emanating from avant-garde traditions while tracing the aesthetic shifts from the structural to narrative. At the same time it is continually new, exploratory and forward looking, notable for its exploration of the borders and overlaps between media forms, a keen use of archival material and frequent appropriation of cinematic forms. Embracing complexity, uncertainty and flux, frequently avoiding tidy closure, Thornton is a self-declared "hardcore experimentalist" whose work is grounded in a profound sense of history but is entirely innovative and forward-looking. She continues to break new ground with each work, celebrating the enormous capacity of media to challenge what we consider art, politics, storytelling and representation itself.

## 10/19 Sunday @ 7:30 pm, YBCA

### Tuned Always to a Shifting Ground, Program One: The Orientalist

Examinations of orientalism are a central theme in Thornton's work. An early memory: "When I was a child, I was enchanted by the image of digging through the earth and finding the Chinese on the other side, only upside-down to us... China was as opposite as one could get, since it was as inverted as possible." Tonight's program groups her 1988 major work, *There Was An Unseen Cloud Moving*, with two newer works on this theme, *Unseen Cloud...*, a collage/biography of Isabelle Eberhardt, a Russian author/adventurer who lived as a Muslim man in 19<sup>th</sup> Century North Africa, closely compares to Chris Marker's work as a free form, impressionistic style of storytelling. *Sahara Mojave* (2007) miss-aligns, with unsettling affect, the backlot of today's Hollywood with the forefront of 19<sup>th</sup> Century orientalist eroticism. *Novel City* (2008)—which includes a reprise of Thornton's 1983 film *Adynata*—came out of a recent trip to Shanghai and embodies the estrangement that arose in processing capitalism's ferocious grasp on China. **2 3 4**

## 10/21 Tuesday @ 7:30 pm, YBCA

### Tuned Always to a Shifting Ground, Program Two: The Arts of Melancholy

"Sensing, facing, absorbing the dark side—it runs through all of my work. Melancholy—it produces a kind of poetic realism that I think is ultimately about beauty and knowledge. It touches at times on the political, but never through direct address. The tone is there, starting with my first film, *X-TRACTS* (1975), in the sound of a voice. It is present in the more recent serial *Let Me Count the Ways* (2004-2006), as it examines personal, cultural, and historical fallout surrounding the bombing of Hiroshima. *She Had Her So He Do He To Her* (1987) looks at censorship through science fictional and tired eyes. *Another Worldy* (1999) is both celebratory of dance, and at the same time telling of the erasures each culture produces to maintain its own coherence. It is in the interstices of language; that is where all of my work resides—in the between. Also screening: *...or lost* (1997), part of the in-progress *The Great Invisible*, and *The Last Time I Saw Ron* (1994), a portrait of actor and close friend Ron Vawter." (Leslie Thornton) **5 6**

## 10/26 Sunday @ 7:30 pm, YBCA

### Tuned Always to a Shifting Ground, Program Three: Peggy and Fred in Hell: The Expiration

*Peggy and Fred in Hell* (1984-2008), Leslie Thornton's major work, is a serial epic akin to the works of Craig Baldwin in its ravenous appropriation of disparate archival footage, radical use of diverse genre forms and embodiment of media history. Various documenting and dramatizing the lives of two children adrift in a post-apocalyptic, yet media saturated, wasteland, *Peggy and Fred...* is equal parts ethnography, science fiction and horror film. Issued episodically and long considered to be perpetually "incomplete," *The Expiration* marks the approach of its unexpected conclusion: "I would say it has been a quest which began to close down after 9/11, when the pretense of the work's 'future tense' (its undefined apocalypse) dissolved into a more disturbing present and then even a past. *Peggy and Fred...* was set in the detritus of the Cold War. In the last few episodes, the serial project finds its narrative arc, ending on a note strangely optimistic, though post-human." Thornton will end the event with a reading of text from *The Eradication*, the final episode in progress of *Peggy and Fred in Hell*. **7 8**

## 11/2 Sunday @ 7:30 pm, YBCA

### Dimensional Bodies

Johanna Grayson and Greta Snider In Person

*Dimensional Bodies*, a collaborative project of landscape gardener and photographer Johanna Grayson and filmmaker Greta Snider, is a collection of intimate and erotically charged stereoscopic slideshow portraits. Using spoken narrative and environmental soundscape to illuminate an array of subjects (including a farmer, a social worker, a veteran, an athlete and a robot-maker), the portraits focus on issues of aging, addiction, vitality, sexual identity and other concerns of the physical body. The stereoscopic aspect of the projection puts additional emphasis on the physical experience of viewing, accentuating the physiology of image processing and creating a sense of physical self-consciousness in the viewer and thus the perfect environment for experiencing the portraits. (Greta Snider) **9 10**



## 46th Ann Arbor Film Festival Touring Program

presented in association with KFJC89.7FM

The Ann Arbor Film Festival is internationally recognized as a premiere showcase for creative, inspiring and influential films of all types: avant-garde and experimental, story-based narratives, documentaries and animation. As the longest-running film festival of its kind in North America, the AAF is steeped in a rich tradition of groundbreaking cinema. In addition to presenting hundreds of films each year during its five-day run, AAF each year curates a touring program presenting highlights of the festival around the world. San Francisco Cinematheque, in partnership with AAF's long-term South Bay host, Foothill College's KFJC-fm, is proud to present this touring program for the first time in ten years.

## 11/6 Thursday @ 8 pm, ATA

### Ann Arbor Film Festival Touring Program, program one

*Doxology* by Michael Langan; *My Olympic Summer* by Daniel Robin; *Yours Truly* by Osbert Parker; *The Green Grass of Twilight* by Richie Sherman; *Frog Jesus* by Ben Peters; *Bullet Proof Vest* by May Lin Au Yung; *Safari* by Catherine Chalmers; *America In Pictures* by Georg Koszulinski; *Crank Balls* by Devin Bell; *Number One* by Leighton Pierce; *Nijuman No Borei (200,000 Phantoms)* by Jean Gabriel Periot; *I Met the Walrus* by Josh Raskin; *LI: The Patterns of Nature* by John Campbell; *Office Suite* by Robert Todd. **10 11 18**

## 11/7 Friday @ 8 pm, ATA

### Ann Arbor Film Festival Touring Program, program two

*A Painful Glimpse Into My Writing Process* by Chel White; *The Anthem* by Apichatpong Weerasethakul; *The Drift* by Kelly Sears; *A Hundred Feet Universe* by Naoko Tasaka; *Spontaneous Generation* by Andrew Cahill; *My Creation Nose* by Richard Dinter; *Mates* by Martin Thoburn; *White Out* by Jeff Scher; *The Adventure* by Mike Brune; *On the Assassination of the President* by Adam Keker; *Brilliant Noise* by Semiconductor; *Energie!* by Thorsten Fleisch; *Portrait #2: Trojan* by Vanessa Renwick; *Observando el Cielo* by Jeanne Liotta. **12 13**

## 11/9 Sunday @ 7:30 pm, YBCA

### Nice Biscotts and More: New Films by Luther Price

The films of Luther Price (*Sodom, Clown, Bottle Can...*) are among the most intense and visceral in all of cinema, frequently immersing viewers in smothering domestic nightmares and presenting teetering monuments to entropy and decay, locating abject horror in the mundane, beauty in the horrific. His recent work, based largely on repetitive assembles of scavenged 16mm strips, replete with his trademark techniques of material distress and physical violation, continues Price's obsessional exploration of identity, sexuality and the extremes of bodily experience. This program presents a selection of this recent work, all completed since 2005, including *Nice Biscotts*, *Nice Baskets*, *Singling Biscotts*, *Dipping Sause*, *Silk* and more.

## 11/23 Sunday @ 7:30 pm, YBCA

### Scott MacDonald on the Spirit Of Canyon Cinema

Scott MacDonald In Person

The 1960s saw the emergence of a wide range of approaches to cinema that offered alternatives to Hollywood commercial filmmaking. By 1961, Bruce Baillie and Chick Strand had begun informal screenings in the Bay Area at a mobile venue they were calling "Canyon Cinema." Soon, Canyon began publishing the *CinemaneWS* and in 1966 became a distribution organization, emerging over the next forty years as the most dependable alternative film distributor in the country. The filmmakers who were part of Canyon and contributed to its success also created a remarkable body of films that were widely influential and continue to provide considerable pleasure. In celebration of his recent book, *Canyon Cinema: The Life and Times of an Independent Film Distributor*, film historian Scott MacDonald presents a selection of significant films from its vibrant early years, including Abigail Child's *Ornaments*; Gunvor Nelson's *Kirsa Nicholina*, *My Name Is Oona* and *Take Off*; Anne Severson and Shelby Kennedy's *Riverbody*; Chick Strand's *Kristallnacht* and *Waterfall*; and Diane Kitchen's 2004 film *Quick's Thicket*. Come early to peruse a selection of vintage *CinemaneWS* and other artifacts from Cinematheque's archive. (Scott MacDonald and Steve Polta) **14 15 16**

**Note:** This program is the third of four Bay Area appearances by Scott MacDonald. The first two will be presented by Canyon Cinema itself on November 21 and 22. The fourth will be presented at Pacific Film Archive on November 25. Please see [www.canyoncinema.com](http://www.canyoncinema.com) and [www.bampfa.berkeley.edu](http://www.bampfa.berkeley.edu) for details

## 11/30 Sunday @ 7:30 pm, YBC

### Dark House curated and presented by Jessica Allee and Wago Kreider

Tonight's program offers shifting perspectives on the privacy of domestic space and its relation to the transience and decay of modern urban architecture. In these works, discreet moments from the past, capturing the city's excitement and vitality, are momentarily recovered and irrevocably lost. Memories of intimate, everyday routines are rendered in solitude while the flickering facades of buildings reverberate in a dust-enshrouded and dilapidated present. In Ben Rivers' *House*, crumbling interiors, peeling walls and shattered windows are reoccupied by the history of horror cinema. Robert Todd's *Office Suite* captures the ambience and daily rhythms of the filmmakers' workspace. Arianne Olthaa's *Binnenverhijven (Zoo Enclosures)* is a disturbing meditation on the primate "bathroom architecture" once popular in European zoos, while Michaela Gull and Martin Siewert's *Cityscapes*, a lush fragmentation and optical dissection of archival imagery from the Austrian Film Museum, captures the ephemeral, fleeting nature of a city's swiftly passing architecture. Additional films on the disintegration of urban space to be announced. (Jessica Allee and Wago Kreider) **17 18**

## 12/7 Sunday @ 7:30 pm, YBCA

### Technology, Nature and Other Matters curated and presented by Charles Boone

A broad view of artists' work in the realm of moving images plus, perhaps, some nice, seeming opposites is explored: Material originally intended for installation will be presented theatrically along with documentation of various sorts and other provocative films and videos. Step by step, Alexandra Steele's *One to the Forty-First Power* dissolves the everyday into abstract worlds. Minyong Jang's *The Breath* details nature's stasis and tiny movements. In *Karaoke Wrong Number*, Rachel Perry Welty riffs on what her answering machine has to say. The images in Sarah Wylie Ammerman's *Swallow* seem to start in a doctor's examining room - perhaps we're actually seeing a weird kind of S/M. Also screening: Masako Tanaka's close-up portrait of Otomo Yoshihide, Michael Hession's *Ten Attempts*, Joshua Kanies' *Chasm*, recent work by David Phillips and Paul Rowley, Christoph Giradet, Mami Kosumura and other diverse treats. (Charles Boone) **19 20**

## 12/11 Thursday @ 8 pm, ATA

### bran(...)+pos + Wiggwam: Sound vs. Image presented in association with Club Sandwich

For years the SF artist known as bran(...)+pos has terrorized audiences worldwide with wildly delirious, butoh-inspired sound/music/noise/face performances. The recent addition of Max/MSP-modulated live video feeds to the infernal exotica cartoon brew takes the already harrowing violence of the artist's performative palette to new delirious dimension. In grunge/organic counterpoint, Wiggwam—the local trio of Douglas Katelus, Loren Means and Randy Lee Sutherland—revive the "lightshow" genre by pairing hand-worked film and vintage psychedelia to their noise rock freakout jams. As if this were not enough, screening between acts will be Ben Russell's *Black and White Trypps Number Three*, a trance/ritual transformation featuring the music of Lightning Bolt, and Terence Hannum's *The Badge of Punishment*, (featuring the sonic squalls of Prurient). **21 22 23 24**

## 12/14 Sunday @ 7:30 pm, YBCA

### At Sea curated and presented by Jennifer Blaylock

"...the cruelty of the sea, its relentlessness and awfulness, rushed upon me. Life had become cheap and tawdry, a beastly and inarticulate thing, a soulless stirring of the ooze and slime. I held on to the weather rail, close by the shrouds, and gazed out across the desolate foaming waves to the low-lying fog-banks that hid San Francisco and the California coast. Rain-squalls were driving in between, and I could scarcely see the fog. And this strange vessel, with its terrible men, pressed under by wind and sea and ever leaping up and out, was heading away into the south-west, into the great and lonely Pacific expanse." (Jack London, *The Sea Wolf*) Screening: a triad meditation of new seafaring films, including local filmmaker matthew swiezynski's *this invisible art of memory - magic hour number 1*, Stephanie Barber's *dwarfs the sea*, and Peter Hutton's *At Sea* which documents the birth, life and death of a forty-ton container ship, including scenes of ship-building in South Korea and ship-breaking in Bangladesh. (Jennifer Blaylock) **25 26**